

BLYTH SPARTANS' veteran defender, Ron Guthrie, has admitted punching the Wycombe Wanderers captain in a half time incident during Saturday's FA Challenge Trophy match.

A report on the shock incident will be discussed at Blyth's next board meeting, on Tuesday.

The out-of-character outburst by Guthrie has surprised fans

EXCLUSIVE

By Philip Smith

and officials alike — they considered the former Newcastle United and Sunderland fullback the quiet man of the side.

The blow was sparked off by an incident on the field just before half-time after Wycombe's John Priestley had to be carried off the field with damaged knee ligaments after a tackle by Guthrie.

As the Blyth players were walking down the

tunnel at half-time the Wycombe skipper, Howard Kennedy, who was not playing because of an ankle injury, made a remark to Guthrie and the blow was struck.

The referee did not see the incident.

Wycombe informed Blyth officials, who said they would look into the matter and take appropriate action.

Wycombe officials and Kennedy have agreed not to take the matter further.

Ron Guthrie said: "It's true I hit him and it serves

him right. He said something that he should not have said — it's as simple as that."

Guthrie alleges Kennedy swore at him.

On the tackle that is said to have started the dispute Guthrie maintains his innocence.

HURT

"I can't help it if a player gets hurt in a tackle — what can you do if someone blames you. There was no justification for what Kennedy said, to me it was a fair tackle."

"I know people say this is out of character for me but when somebody has a go at you for nothing when your adrenalin is flowing you just lose your temper."

"There was no problem on the field at all and if it had not been for this man the match would have passed off smoothly."

Guthrie, who is in his last full season with Blyth, said: "I'm not worried about what might happen over this. The referee did not say anything. No one has mentioned it to me."

"If this had happened to an ordinary player nothing would have been said about it because it has happened to me they're making a fuss."

PROVOKED

Blyth manager, Jack Marks, refused to comment on the punching incident.

On the tackle that provoked it he said: "I don't think there was anything wrong with the tackle. He just twisted his knee."

"The referee has not made an official report on the incident so no comment."

Blyth chairman, Jim Turney, is on holiday in Hong Kong now, but vice-chairman Jack Donohoe said: "If Ron did punch him we will have to inquire about it and get some facts for the next board meeting."

"If the captain was making himself a nuisance he should have had more sense because Ron is the last person you would expect to do this."

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RON GUTHRIE heading for goal during Blyth's 3-0 defeat at Wycombe in a second round FA Challenge Trophy tie.